

FILED

SEP 11 2009

CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT

By _____
Deputy

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
FORT WORTH DIVISION**

**HENRY JOE DENT JR.,
Petitioner,**

v.

**RICK THALER, Director,
Texas Department of Criminal Justice,
Correctional Institutions Division,
Respondent.**

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Civil Action No. 4:09-CV-237-Y

**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION
OF THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
AND NOTICE AND ORDER**

This cause of action was referred to the United States Magistrate Judge pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b), as implemented by an order of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas. The Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendation of the United States Magistrate Judge are as follows:

I. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. NATURE OF THE CASE

This is a petition for writ of habeas corpus by a state prisoner under 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

B. PARTIES

Petitioner Henry Joe Dent Jr., TDCJ-ID # 929233, is in custody of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Correctional Institutions Division, and in Amarillo, Texas.

Respondent Rick Thaler is the Director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Correctional Institutions Division.

C. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURE HISTORY

The history relevant to this case is set forth in the undersigned's findings and conclusions

in *Dent v. Dretke*, Civil Action No. 4:05-CV-0139-Y.¹ This petition is Dent's second federal petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to § 2254 in which he challenges his 2000 state court conviction for murder in Tarrant County, Texas. His prior petition was denied on the merits on July 14, 2005, and Dent's appeal was dismissed by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals for lack of jurisdiction. The state has filed a motion to dismiss this second petition as successive.

D. SUCCESSIVE PETITION

Section 2244(b) requires dismissal of a claim presented in a second or successive petition filed by a state prisoner under § 2254 that was or could have been presented in a prior petition unless—

(A) the application shows that the claim relies on a new rule of constitutional law, made retroactive to cases on collateral review by the Supreme Court, that was previously unavailable; or

(B)(i) the factual predicate for the claim could not have been discovered previously through the exercise of due diligence; and

(ii) the facts underlying the claim, if proven and viewed in light of the evidence as a whole, would be sufficient to establish by clear and convincing evidence that, but for constitutional error, no reasonable factfinder would have found the applicant guilty of the underlying offense.

28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(1)-(2). Further, before such a petition is filed in federal district court, the petitioner must move for authorization to file the petition in the appropriate court of appeals. *Id.* § 2244(b)(3).

From the face of this petition, it is apparent that this is a successive petition, and Dent has not demonstrated that he has obtained authorization to file such a petition from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(1)-(3). Under these circumstances, a district court may

¹The court takes judicial notice of the federal and state court records, which it is entitled to do, in Dent's previous federal petition.

either dismiss the petition without prejudice pending review by a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, or it may transfer the successive petition to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals to determine whether the petitioner should be allowed to file the petition in the district court. *In re Epps*, 127 F.3d 364, 365 (5th Cir. 1997).

II. RECOMMENDATION

In the interest of justice, it is recommended that the state's motion to dismiss be denied and that this action be transferred to the United States District Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit to determine whether a successive § 2254 should be allowed.

III. NOTICE OF RIGHT TO OBJECT TO PROPOSED FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION AND CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO OBJECT

A copy of this report and recommendation shall be served on all parties in the manner provided by law. Any party who objects to any part of this report and recommendation must file specific written objections within 10 days after being served with a copy. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The court is extending the deadline within which to file specific written objections to the United States Magistrate Judge's proposed findings, conclusions, and recommendation until October 2, 2009. In order to be specific, an objection must identify the specific finding or recommendation to which objection is made, state the basis for the objection, and specify the place in the magistrate judge's report and recommendation where the disputed determination is found. An objection that merely incorporates by reference or refers to the briefing before the magistrate judge is not specific. Failure to file specific written objections will bar the aggrieved party from appealing the factual findings and legal conclusions of the magistrate judge that are accepted or adopted by the district court, except upon grounds of plain error. *See Douglass*

v. *United Services Automobile Ass'n*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1417 (5th Cir. 1996).

IV. ORDER

Under 28 U.S.C. § 636, it is ordered that each party is granted until October 2, 2009, to serve and file written objections to the United States Magistrate Judge's proposed findings, conclusions, and recommendation. It is further ordered that if objections are filed and the opposing party chooses to file a response, a response shall be filed within seven (7) days of the filing date of the objections.

It is further ordered that the above-styled and numbered action, previously referred to the United States Magistrate Judge for findings, conclusions, and recommendation, be and hereby is returned to the docket of the United States District Judge.

SIGNED September 11, 2009.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Bleil", written over a horizontal line.

CHARLES BLEIL
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE